

STATEMENT TO HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (supplemental)
28 MARCH 2005
BRIGHTON

"[T]o each according to his need."

-- Karl Marx

A culture of dependency in transportation has arisen in Michigan. Through a vast schedule of public expenditures over the past fifty years, a sense of entitlement has grown in the thinking of local officials who encourage development patterns far beyond local resources. They accordingly expect the State of Michigan and pass-through Federal funds to solve problems they have created. In extreme cases they use exogenous funds to build facilities which require further amelioration. This modus operandi is a moral defect and must be subject to fiscal discipline.

The language of consumer "choice" and libertarianism creeps into this culture of public goods dependency. However, in this case the freedom to lobby in Lansing is as important as "individual decisions" of classical economics. The Invisible Hand turns out to be that of the state.

If people move to an engineered distribution with "congestion" or "gridlock," then so be it. Such predicaments call for individual endurance or local public solutions. One routinely found such words in Transportation Research Record in the 1990s in a country that had spent four decades in massive road building. In my presence in 1989 MDOT's Director of Planning, Mr. Adams, said, "We can't build our way out of congestion." Local officials in Kent, Ottawa, Macomb, and Oakland Counties, however, are keen on it -- using outside money. Local solutions may require creative statute or financing for which Legislative permission is needed. Exurbanites, long distance commuters including the trucking industry, and developers must press their local officials, not Lansing or distant Washington, times especially being what they are.

Duly thanking the Chairman,



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